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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park said this week he'll fight for federal legislation to block permanently the Federal Railroad Administration from imposing safety measures some area municipalities consider unfair.

The FRA extended a whistle ban on April 22 at grade level railroad crossings that already have such bans. To increase safety, the federal agency wants trains to sound their horns as they approach at-grade crossings unless FRA-approved safety measures are in place, such as large barrier gates or roadway changes to discourage motorists from driving around gates. Communities oppose these measures because of their expense and impracticality in some areas.

Under rules developed from a 1994 federal law, train crews were to start sounding the horn at every crossing starting April 1 unless a community filed paperwork stating it had a pre-existing quiet zone and wished to keep it in place. The towns would then have four to seven years to adopt measures to cut the risk of accidents that horns might otherwise prevent.

Kirk's proposal would put railroad crossings in Illinois under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation.

"I have very little faith the FRA can fairly administer this rule for the Chicago area," Kirk said.